

March 16, 2009: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary

Good day, distinguished members of the Committee on the Judiciary. I am here to testify in OPPOSITION to SB353 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MICROSTAMPING OF SEMIAUTOMATIC PISTOLS.

My name is Tom Violante. I'm a New Haven resident and a current member of the New Haven Raccoon Club with 235 members with families who hunt, fish and engage in the shooting and archery sports. I'm one of 5 election volunteer coordinators with the NRA in CT who works with thousands of voters in Congressional District 4 to vote for federal and state candidates who support the Second Amendment and Connecticut's own Article 1, Section 15.

I defer to the experts who have testified before me and who follow about the technical and scientific reasons this bill is a waste of taxpayer time at these hearings and taxpayer money to propose this in the first place. I don't ever doubt Senator Looney's sincerity in seeking ways to stop crimes committed with guns, but he is misinformed by so-called experts in support of microstamping that this will prevent criminals from using guns in crimes. It won't.

During these dire times with budgetary shortfalls, why do legislators see fit to spend our money researching and proposing frivolous bills like microstamping, which has only been passed in California, a state that has a \$33 billion dollar deficit, can't figure out how to implement microstamping?

Your oath of office says "that you will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut," both of which contain articles insuring that we, the people, shall keep and bear arms. Microstamping seeks to modify these two constitutional rights in violation of your oath. It's a de facto effort to infringe on gun ownership rights, an act in itself contrary to federal and state constitutions. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the District of Columbia versus Heller case states that the Second Amendment is exactly what it says, that we have a right to keep and bear arms and that right shall not be infringed.

Microstamping won't reduce the criminal misuse of firearms but will prevent law-abiding citizens from buying firearms that will be prohibitively expensive. Criminals will continue to buy black market guns and, deface serial numbers and microstamped information. Enforce the hundreds of laws already on the books to severely punish criminals who commit crimes with guns. Impose a mandatory 10-year sentence for gun crimes. Punish or remove prosecutors and judges who make plea deals to eliminate gun charges and lower sentence terms. Fully fund task forces that remove illegal guns from the streets and gun-using criminals from society. It's the USER that kills with a gun, with a knife or with a car, not the INSTRUMENT or its manufacturer.

Shall we microstamp knives? Baseball bats? Automobiles? Crowbars? All have been misused by criminals to commit crimes. Act responsibly by OPPOSING SB353. Please don't punish We, the People, the law-abiding citizens of Connecticut who respect the law and act within the law. We took valuable and costly time off from our jobs today to come before you and ask that you uphold the federal and state constitutions and allow the right of the people to keep and bear arms, without infringement.

Quick Facts About Microstamping

1. It can be easily defeated in seconds using common household tools.
2. Criminals could simply switch the engraved firing pin for readily available unmarked spare parts, thereby circumventing the technology.
3. Criminals can and will easily defeat micro-stamping for the same reason they now deface the serial number on to avoid detection by law enforcement.
4. Criminals won't buy microstamped pistols because they get 80% of them from the black market.
5. Criminals will be able to confuse the police and send them on "wild goose" chases by simply throwing around at crime scenes expended cartridge casings (having a make, model and serial number imprinted on them) from other firearms. Expended shell casings would be widely available at shooting ranges all across the state.
6. Criminals can avoid the technology by simply using firearms that do not eject shell casings, i.e. revolvers, thus leaving no casing at the crime scene.
7. Criminals modify their behaviors and will always find ways to obtain firearms. If this technology were mandated, it would only affect purchases by law-abiding citizens.
8. Micro-stamping firearms will not reduce crime. It's a faulty assumption that most criminals obtain the firearms they use to commit crime from federally licensed firearm retailers. A 1997 U.S. Dept. of Justice survey of prison inmates shows they obtain firearms primarily – about 80% – from the illegal black market and from friends and family.